

## **Press Release**

# **Executive must fastrack renewable energy projects**

The Quarry Products Association of Northern Ireland that represents approximately 95% of the supply of construction aggregates to the Construction Industry has thrown its full support behind the DETINI Minister, Arlene Foster, and encourages her to progress the Strategic Energy Framework as quickly as possible and added that it must include the fast tracking of land and sea based renewable energy projects.

QPANI Regional Director, Gordon Best, said "Given the unprecedented downturn that our aggregates and construction industries have experienced recently, the significant increases in energy costs and the longer term uncertainty of overseas energy supply our Executive must make the fast tracking of land and sea based renewable energy projects and the urgent upgrade of the electricity transmission grid a key priority. I can forgive people who may see this as self interest from our industry as we would benefit significantly from the huge amounts of stone and concrete required for these energy projects. Large wind farms at sea have the added medium to longer term benefit of creating sanctuaries for sea life and underwater biodiversity as ships and fishing vessels would be prohibited from entering areas where wind turbines are located". Mr Best added, "Within the quarry products sector we are doing our bit to reduce our carbon footprint with energy efficiency a key priority for many, the use of low carbon road materials and many members erecting their own wind turbines to generate their own energy. As an organisation we are part of the Green New Deal Group and we recognise that significant investment, both public and private, in renewable energy and whole life low carbon construction presents a unique opportunity to create and sustain thousands of jobs and create a legacy for future generations. The Island of Ireland has the

potential to be virtually self sufficient in renewable energy terms, we just need the will and the drive to get it done and that is why we are calling on the Executive, particularly those Ministers with influence over energy policy, planning and environment, finance and regional development to work together to make this happen. QPANI would also encourage our political representatives to show real leadership and take the general public on a journey to remove the "not in my back yard" attitude that is so prevalent in Northern Ireland. Whether it be energy from waste plants, wind farms or gas storage the majority of such projects are for the greater good of Northern Ireland PLC. We must look at ways of compensating or incentivising local residents who are impacted by such projects".

The reality is if we are to reduce the number of oil tankers coming down Belfast Lough, our dependence on fuel from volatile areas of the world, reducing our carbon emissions and giving our children a future where energy supply is secure then we need to act and act now.

### **Notes for the Editor**

The Quarry Products Association NI represents approximately 95% of companies involved in the supply of quarry products to the Construction Industry in Northern Ireland. Our Association draws its membership from companies engaged in providing primary aggregates, the processing of recycled and secondary materials, the production of downstream products such as asphalt, lime mortar, ready-mixed concrete, precast concrete and road surfacing contracting. The Quarry Products Sector employs approximately 3800 people across Northern Ireland and has a turnover of some £500 million.

For further information please contact Gordon Best Regional Director QPANI 07876136929 or 02890824078 or email [gbest@qpani.org](mailto:gbest@qpani.org)

Regards  
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